



13 novembre... 22 mars...

SPARTACUS

no. 13

A journal of opinions and general bloviation by
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Again ...

I cannot guess the rationale that leads men to massacre innocents. Psychosis, even psychosis born of doctrine, makes paths for people that others less obsessed and less maniacal find impossible to imagine. It's as if they were another species, less comprehensible than the animal life we know, driven not by the primal instincts that move beasts and birds but by alien impulses and decisions grown in some dimension where the hope and suffering of human beings is as unimportant as dust kicked up on the road.

The answers we're given to the proliferation of such obscenities border on obscenity themselves.

Ted Cruz' idea of segregating Muslims and subjecting them to special police patrol is not only wrong on a moral level, but desperately ill-informed and destructive. Our strength as a society is in integrating diverse cultures – e

pluribus unum. One of the reason ISIS prospers more easily in Europe than it has here is because European nations isolate Muslims so completely. It would tax the credulity of the wildest maniac in Bellevue to suggest that we recreate those conditions here. And Donald Trump, an overt racist from the start of his ego-driven assault on the American body politic, has no less brainless a policy to offer – again, segregation, torture and suspicion over assimilation of Islam and recruitment of its solid, decent multitudes to our side. Which is how we will protect ourselves, maintain ourselves, and win.

Of course, there are different sorts of victory. I think the most powerful and instructive example came from a couple of Mormon kids injured in the explosions, interviewed from their hospital beds a day or so afterwards. They were wrapped in bandages and one, a college boy, was wearing a gauze mask as protection from infection. Though very close to the blast, he was lucid – whatever dope they fed him obviously hadn't affected his wits. He broke down, just a little, speaking of the moment and the pain that followed, but his concern for the other people in the area – many of whom, he insisted, were hurt far worse than he – showed his youth and his innate decency and his toughness. Obviously, a tough, good kid. His parents' anguish and pride when they came in was evident and well justified.

There was another kid shown, a young lady, a girl, her hands and the top part of her face mummy-wrapped, her voice shy and weak, telling a compassionate female reporter what had happened to her. When asked to guess at why the killers had planted their bombs, she was obviously perplexed, but figured that the bombers were sad, and wanted everybody to be sad with them. She credited her faith with getting her through. We despise such faith in our genre, since we have genetically superior intellects or something, but that only shows how little we understand the purpose and value of belief. When it's real, as it is for those kids, it sustains people against evil.



Speaking of politics ... The presidential election of 2016 came into sharper focus as winter, 2016, faded and spring – albeit a wintry one—came on. That is, if chaos and horror constitute focus.

On the side I take, Hillary Clinton went 5 for 5 in the primaries on the Ides of March, a sweep that surprised those of us who read Facebook and thought the enthusiasm of Bernie Sanders supporters meant anything of significance at the actual polls. Instead, the old Obama coalition held for the Hillster and all of the tweets and cute college girls posting “Feel the Bern” on Facebook did little for Sanders. I spent the evening of March 15 alternately whooping it up (internally) for Hillary and trying to convince FB BernieBabies that the world hadn't ended and they would be needed in November. Truer words ... because although there are months of primaries left to endure, plenty of time for Bernie to galvanize more teenagers and win a few caucuses himself – some in the week in which this *Spar* sees print – Democrats will soon need to unify and *QFA* – for true peril awaits.

Let me steal an aside and go into a distinction Republicans, indeed, obsessives of every stripe, don't understand – the difference between civilized behavior and Political Correctness. Here's an example of the latter. Nancy Reagan kicked off recently and, as a gesture to a “fellow” first lady, Hillary Clinton attended her funeral. Just to be nice, and not checking with her advisers, she praised the Reagans' work on AIDS. Gays and Bernie Sanders supporters went ballistic. The Reagans, they said, ignored the disease and its devastation while in office. Hillary was siding with the devil.

As I wrote on FB: I've listened to the afflicted and the neglected all my life. And I know the difference between an honest mistake made out of kindness to the dead and hypocrisy. **P.C. IS STUPID**. It turns the passionate against those who have their best interests at heart in the name of petty obedience to petty demands. Hillary has spent her life in defense of the weak and the powerless. Justice has always been her aim – or is her speech before the Red Chinese on behalf of human rights to be forgotten because she failed to pass a harmless compliment to a dead predecessor through all the filters of the totally spoiled and easily offended?

In contrast to this, let's look at the statements and positions of Donald Trump. His description of Mexican immigrants as rapists and drug dealers. His attack on the war record of *bona fide* American hero John McCain. His repellant sexism towards Megan Kelly. His treatment of Chris Christie after that pitiful fool laid bare his desperation and endorsed him. His overt incitement of his supporters to brutalize protesters. His sleazy assertion that Ted Cruz' wife is ugly and has ugly secrets. His affected ignorance of that repugnant fraud, David Duke (to whom I once shouted, from the safety of a moving car, "Sig heil, you asshole!"). His proposal to wall off America, an idea that the Pope himself condemned as anti-Christian (which settles it). His proposals to exclude immigrants from entrance into the United States on religious grounds is so illegal as to resemble raw Orwellian fantasy.

Is the difference not evident? Then look at the Trump rally in Chicago, and the melee that resulted when protesters met true believers. It recalled 1968, that most tormented of election years, but not the Democratic Convention. The scene reminded me more of George Wallace's run for the nomination and later third party bid, where his repulsive (and mostly hypocritical) racism was met with a barrage of noisy protests. Though none grew as violent as Trump's, that's because Wallace, for all his phony political posture (he wasn't *that* racist; he was, in fact, the first judge in Alabama history to sentence a white man to death for killing a black man), didn't encourage brutality as zealously and joyfully as Trump does. The Donald is a menace to this society – and so are those who lap up his will and call it mother's milk.

That's the difference between political correctness and common civility: the one punishes words that offends a rule nobody knew existed and the other actively promotes generally non-offensive, i.e. polite behavior.

I continue to feel a lot of sympathy for most Trump supporters. They're lost and frightened and angry at they don't know what and unsophisticated and have been left behind by the world. Their worries about free trade have some merit. But no one talking to the disenfranchised and threatened but the demagogues. Bernie preaches to his choir and Hillary makes grand speeches that impress pundits but never reach those affected. (Apparently she talked about promoting female entrepreneurship in those suspicious speeches to Wall Street; another Clinton "scandal" hits the rocks.) She needs to vary up her rhetoric, keep it positive, respond instantly to Trump madness, and in plain, simple language address the concerns of Trump's constituency. And do so without boogeymen: Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese ... or billionaires.

Trump's crowds can be dangerous. But they are our fellow citizens. We need to recover them ... somehow.

The dangerousness of Donald Trump has finally sunk into the heads of the Republican Party. Mitt Romney and "establishment" money men are trying to move against Trump – their tight, controlled, smooth speech contrasting dramatically with his crude, rambling brutality – but theirs is a Republican base that *prefers* brutality. The delicious fantasy of a brokered convention has surfaced, wherein party poohbahs will try to wrest the nomination from Trump's hands. This is not impossible, even should Trump win all of the primaries and ostensibly, all of the delegates – since a lot of those delegates *are not really Trump supporters*. They're political pros who hate Trump's guts and sense disaster. Many might be hungry for the chance to defy the voters and vote for somebody, anybody else.

Can you imagine the furor? Trump predicts riots if that happens. Oh yeah. And isn't it a *lovely* thought?

Here's a lovelier one: high noon, January 20, 2017. Hillary Clinton takes the oath as President ... administered by *Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.



Speaking of the Supreme Court ... The self-immolation of the Republican Party continues with the Congress' refusal to consider President's Obama's superb choice to replace Antonin Scalia, Merrick Garland. I'm not as familiar with his decisions as I should be, but nothing that I have read or heard suggests that he would be a partisan or incompetent justice, or indeed anything but dedicated, balanced and fair. It is an insult to the entire body of American law to treat this excellent judge with such contempt.

Of course, the Republicans' true contempt is for Obama, who has, like Bill Clinton before him, bested them at every turn. Garland may have been a chess piece in the ongoing war between the President and the

Congress, designed to call their bluff – and I’m aware I’m confusing my game metaphors – but he is brilliantly placed. The Republicans only look cheap and foolish in refusing to give him his due consideration.



Speaking of legal stuff ... In re the controversy that has erupted between those American powerhouses, Apple and the FBI. As you recall, the government wanted Apple to lend it assistance in decrypting a terrorist’s cellphone, in hopes of discovering his contacts and perhaps avoiding further attacks. Apple resisted, claiming that their customers’ assumption of complete protection of their data primed ... well, everything. I was poised to pen portentous pomposity promoting the primacy of public purpose past privacy problems when my alliterative abilities abandoned me – oh, enough – and a tiny news tidbit slipped through.

The FBI thinks it’s got this beat. Apple’s help won’t be necessary.

This itself doesn’t bother me. I *want* our intelligence communities to be able to unlock cellphones. Their experts should be the best in the world; no criminal should be able to best them. But of course, cellphones should be subject to IV Amendment protections the same as any other documents. We must *demand* that if authority snoops into a private cellphone, they do so only under warrant backed by probable cause in front of a neutral magistrate.



Speaking again of legal stuff ... Returning in February from the deep boonies of Louisiana, where I’d interviewed for a federal prosecution job, I received a phone call. Keeping my eyes on the road, and watching for cops, I answered same, and spoke to a lady named Ingrid who paid me an extravagant compliment. I was, she said, *a feminist hero*, and she wanted to interview me for a documentary film.

I must say this was a hoot. For how many years did I have to listen to bleats of “sexist” in fandom because I refused to believe that “girl” was a four-letter word – well, *it is*, obviously, but you know what I mean. Ingrid wasn’t dealing in fannish matters, however, but following up on what I call the “Lucy” case. It had nothing to do with Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, but with a client I represented many years back in St. John Parish, Louisiana.

It was a weird case. SFPAns forgive me, but I’m going to quote my own description of the matter from the latest *Spiritus Mundi*:

Lucy – I call her Lucy – was first the wife of a client, then a client herself. Her husband had been charged with second degree murder and I got him a lesser charge and a low sentence. (Lucy was so pleased with my work she sent me a jar of candy.) Life being what it is and people being human, while her husband was locked up Lucy had an affair and conceived a child. She had not realized the latter fact when, in her bathroom, she miscarried. The child – the foetus, whatever you wish to call it – was not viable and passed away.

What happened then was unknown. Not even Lucy seemed certain. When she went to the hospital due to severe feminine bleeding, she gave three inconsistent statements – varying in all but a few material facts. Where they all concurred was this: the child was born, died, she held it, washed it, hid it in a dresser drawer – and then, shockingly, in the grip of an emotion at which I can never guess, placed it in a trash can and watched them take it away.

The cops searched for the body but could find none. They had no evidence of any kind, save the defendant’s own statements – but they still locked her up, and charged her with second degree murder. A year later, I came into the case, got neo-natologists involved and found Lucy’s medical records, and to make a very long story very short, put our lady judge into tears and got the anti-abortion D.A. to backpedal furiously. Lucy pleaded out to a minor misdemeanor – improper disposition of human remains – and time served. She was asked to appear on Montel Williams, but demurred – and disappeared, at least according to Ingrid, the lady who called me on the road. She is doing a documentary on reproductive freedom, she said, and since Lucy was unavailable, she wanted to interview the lawyer responsible for justice being done in her case. Me.

When I returned to Merritt Island, I located, copied and sent my *Challenger* 21 article on the case – “The Best Speech I Never Gave”, the draft of my closing argument – to Ingrid. I have heard nothing since. Which is okay. Whether or not I ever hear from Ingrid again, in the real world, outside of p.c., *Guy Lillian is a feminist hero*.



Speaking of my career in legal stuff ... I have often, in bitter moments, looked back to my career as a Louisiana public defender and wished that I could return to it. Nowadays, however, it looks like my dreams were akin to yearning for a job as a deckhand on the *Titanic*.

The state, and its indigent defense system, is in chaos. Budgetary shortfalls have stranded hundreds of accused felons – emphasis on “accused” – in jail without attorneys, court dates, or any hope of juridical process. Many facing serious charges – crimes against people and property – may well have to go free. All because Louisiana will not pay for their legally-required attorneys.

I worked for three different public defender offices in three different parishes during my 23 years in “the pits.” All three were financed by collections on traffic tickets, which made the PDs dependent on law enforcement and prosecution – an obvious conflict. In fact, one outfit was forced to lay people off because the DA’s office started putting every offender it could into a diversion program, where no fines were collected. We were convinced it was because we regularly beat them in court like so many tom-toms.

All of this is because the legislature was loath to finance public defenders with public money. In an unsophisticated and frightened state like Louisiana, it became rote for candidates to charge their opponents with being soft on crime – which was, of course and alas, code for being soft on race. Paying for accused’s lawyers – as is mandated by any number of Supreme Court cases, starting with *Gideon v. Wainwright* – is suicidal in such an environment, unless of course politicians have the courage to educate their constituents as to the fundamentals of the Constitution. Which is worthy of a hearty hoo-hah, of course.

Our beloved former governor, Bobby Jindal, based his administration and his ridiculous presidential bid on laying off government “bureaucrats” and lowering taxes. His state is in chaos, and public defenders in Louisiana are starving. Parishes – counties, to you – are destitute. *The New York Times* reported that one parish employs one-count-her-one PD these days – and people charged with felonies just can’t get into court. Which means, if you can’t guess, that they go free.

TANSTAAFL, people. In this case, that means that you have a choice: understand what a society has to do to fulfill its foundational needs and ante up, or live in a country where you cannot jail people accused of crimes.



Speaking not at all of legal stuff ... Suddenly highest on my want-to-read list is Chris Offutt’s memoir *My Father the Pornographer*, about the talented writer’s pain-etched relationship with his father – andrew j. offutt, and no, autocorrect, you don’t capitalize his name.

Like everybody reading this I knew andy; he was a staple of fannish life, a frequent MC and GoH at Southern conventions. I drew a grin from him once when I told him that the m.s. of a John Cleve novel was the first fiction I read after relieving myself of my most useless distinction. He was MC at my first Fan Guest of Honor stint, at the Knoxville convention where we collated the 100th mailing of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. If he had a testy reputation he more than made up for that with his humor, which was exultant. And he had the world’s sweetest wife, the adorable Jodie, whom I have always regarded as a sweet soulmate. She is a doll baby who contributed a terrific piece to *Challenger* – as did one of her daughters.

So I always enjoyed andy offutt. Of course, he didn’t raise me. Apparently that was a strain. Chris Offutt, whose work has appeared in *Esquire* and other high-falutin’ venues, has written about it – and apparently the book is brilliant. I wonder, though, about the title. Without reading more than reviews, it seems that it’s the penning of porn that bothered Chris the most.

Which is a concern. We all know busloads of science fiction writers from the good old days who supplemented their income with porn. Very few have been shy about recounting the stories. That's all passé. Thanks to the internet and its glut of smut, language and imagination are no longer a vehicle for delicious dirtiness. Offutt clearly feels a touch of shame about it. Is that due to the maturation of society to a point where books appealing to the lizard brain are even less acceptable than in the past?

I shall have to read this book.



Speaking of science fiction writers ... My father-in-law, Joseph L. Green, has kept his household busy in recent weeks prepping a new website – **Greenhouse Scribes** – through which he hopes to reprint his best professional work and some hitherto unpublished material. Here's a draft of his

MISSION STATEMENT

Greenhouse Scribes (GS) provides quality science fiction and fantasy for a general audience, making permanently available material that has previously appeared primarily in print or e-magazines. A particular focus is on the work of Joseph Green. GS will maintain the "Joseph Green" page on Amazon as a permanent address for stories from often difficult to obtain print magazines, and usually temporarily available e-zines. All GS projects will include hardcover editions of collected stories and new novels.

"That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong." -- F Scott Fitzgerald

Rosy has been hard at work designing covers for Joe's short stories which are available on Amazon – the woman's talents astound me – and they're working on expanding beyond. She's been after me to collect some of the better public defender stories I've related in *Challenger* into a book of my own, and who knows, maybe this will be the most likely landing spot for "Cross Cypress" ... once I work up the nerve to show it to somebody.



ROCS THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING. TRA LA

David Williams
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Your assessment of Scalia is a little too negative. It's true, he didn't create a new conservative consensus on the court, but his "original intent" theory has become a standard element in judicial deliberations. All the legal pundits on TV have pointed out that today, most judicial rulings begin with the plain language of the Constitution. Then, if the judges wish to deviate from that plain language, they have to come up with a justification. And they do, it's still business as usual. Before Scalia, you could begin with the "living document" thesis, after Scalia you have to deal with the plain language and original intent before having any fun. And, of course, everyone seizes on the plain language when it supports their position. No one is talking about a "living document" when they point out that the Constitution says the President "shall appoint" a candidate to fill a SCOTUS vacancy.

I fully agree with your assessment of the fake Oscars controversy. The Academy members aren't especially racist, it's the lack of movies in which "people of color" can find leading roles. The studios and financiers are the problem.

Bill Mummy makes a good case for himself. But I have to say, I was a little shocked when I learned that Academy members who haven't worked in the industry for ten years are still voting. Clearly, that could slow down the recognition and acceptance of new concepts and new talents. We all like to stick with the familiar and what has always worked before.

If Bill can't get any good roles and turns down all the tawdry ones, that explains why he can't get top-caliber representation. Agents have mouths to feed, so they need to represent working actors. As far as his Academy status goes, why not accept one of those unappealing roles once every ten years just to keep his membership active?

But "panic" was the right word regarding the Academy's rules changes. They do need to cut off the old gaffers, but they don't need racial and other quotas to solve a problem that doesn't really exist. Just open the membership to the younger generation. I suspect there's an element of vanity and status involved, since membership is by election. So, of course, the long-time members don't want all those snotty newbies crowding into their sanctum. It's like a country club thing, once you're in, you are in (in two meanings of the word).

Regarding our silly primary election process, I have a horrible confession to make. The more primaries Trump wins, the more tempted I am to see how he might do as President. It must be my science fiction genes kicking in. I grew up reading "what if" stories. This is a doozie. Some publisher missed a golden opportunity by not commissioning a quicky novel set in the near future of the Trump administration. It could have been written in March and April, published in July, and sold a million copies by election day. Stephen King might have been the right guy to write it. He knows how to include drama, thrills, and relationships in a horror story.

"By what men say, so shall ye know them." Trump promises nothing but hubris, arrogance, impulsive and brutal action, a contempt for expertise and nuance. His ascendancy to the Presidency would be an unthinkable horror.

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Not being American, I pay plenty of attention to Canadian politics, but you can't help be inundated with news from the upcoming presidential election, and other news, too. It is easy to be horrified at some of the dissenting decisions that came from Scalia; indeed, just about anything that comes out of a Republican mouth can give us a WTF moment, doubting I heard what he or she said. Yet, much of what I see comes from news sites, television stations, and that great magnifier of opinion, especially controversial opinion, Facebook and other social media. I saw earlier today that Clarence Thomas asked a question, which shocked many. There may be some that say that both your parties may be wrong and bad, but as long as the Republicans are controlled by the Kochs, The Democrats seem to be your only sane choice.

Albert Einstein considered gravitational waves decades ago, but of course, there was no way to prove they existed. I do not know how they were finally detected, but now that they have been, science may once again be a growth industry, with a new field of science to explore. I look forward to seeing what else may be discovered with this.

As appealing as Bernie Sanders is, I can definitely see Hillary Clinton winning the Democratic nomination. This will be a good thing, for with her common-sense approaches, Trump will eventually lose his cool, and say some horribly sexist things that will lose him the presidency. I hope... The idea of President Trump is so horrid to some, I hope the roads going north to Canada are well-paved, and the border points are well-staffed. (I also hope Bernie Sanders will be brought on board Clinton's cabinet. He's too valuable to lose.)

I'd rather Bernie stay independent of Hillary's administration and kick her butt when and if she fouls up.

I gather Bill Mummy isn't the only one to have his Oscar franchise arbitrarily curtailed. Most organizations in any age are run and staffed by old white men, and AMPAS is no different. I pray for the day that we never mention the colour of one's skin, and remember that thanks to genome scientists, the only real race is the human race.

I do not have a Hugo franchise again, but I can certainly give some opinions. I agree with anyone you list for any of the Fan categories, but I doubt that any of them will appear on the final ballot. Fan Hugos no longer go to anyone in fandom, but to friends of pros.

I'm friends with lots of pros, so where's my damn rocket?

My LOC ... the Kevin O'Leary I mentioned has indeed floated the idea of his entering politics. He has stirred the pot by not necessarily embracing the Conservative Party, as all suspected, but by showing some interest in leading the Liberal Party, already in power, led by Justin Trudeau. Life Trump, most look at O'Leary and ask, just what is he up to?

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In *Spartacus* #12, I must really respond to a point in Lloyd Penney's letter. The response is No, No, No, No, No, and No! That's a negatory even. Ruth Berman was *not* Ruth the Trekkie. Ruth Berman was/is one of the most literate fan writers ever. I believe she was nominated for best fan writer back in the sixties. By now, she must be retired from some level of professorship in the English department at the University of Minnesota.

I was being a little bit discreet about the identity of Ruth the Trekkie, because my comments indicated she wasn't in the best mental health. She was one of those unfortunate people who live on the fringes of society. She died a number of years ago.

I usually try to limit if not totally avoid political comments. Arguing about politics never seems to accomplish anything. However, I will make one comment on what I regard as the biggest defect of the Democrats. They won't enforce any immigration laws whatsoever. They apparently believe all immigrants will vote for them. Any comments that maybe existing immigration laws should be enforced are greeted with accusations of racism.

If 10 or 12 illegal aliens were entering the City of Los Angeles every day, nobody would care. The last time I had any fairly definite numbers on the situation, the rate was 200 to 300 per day. When I got out of Los Angeles, I was the second to last English speaker on my block. I certainly didn't want to be the last English speaker on the block.

One of the reasons I moved to Simi Valley was to hear English spoken on the streets again. I also was getting tired of the sound of automatic weapons fire in the evening, and I knew the Crips homicides were getting closer all the time. After quiet reflection, I'm very glad I don't live in Reseda anymore.

The Dark Forest seems like the novel which should win the Hugo this year. SFWA can't very well vote for a foreign novel for the Nebula, so they will have to be satisfied with something else.

Taral Wayne

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Facebook is clearly undermining fanzine fandom. After a couple of grueling hours dealing with people who deny global warming, who argue that the federal government's powers are illegitimate, or believe that Obama is a Muslim, who think that prayer and flag ceremonies should be reinstated in schools, or want their children taught creationism, who apparently view stepping over diseased bodies in the street is a higher form of civilization that publicly funded hospitals, believe that a society armed to the teeth against the hoodlums and terrorists everywhere is a more *peaceful* one, and that the Earth's resources are not limited because scientists (who are otherwise ridiculed as academic fakers) will discover miracle solutions, who has the time or the inclination to carry on the struggle against willful stupidity in fanzines?

At least that's been my experience.

But in this last *Spartacus* you make a statement so outrageous that I simply cannot let it go unchallenged.

I refer, of course, to your suggestion that I deserve to be nominated for the Hugo as a fan artist. Oh, sure, this used to be true. Perhaps I deserved to have won the Hugo for fan artist at one time. But as Hugo Committees and strict interpreters have frequently reminded us, the Hugo is not for lifetime achievement but for the

accomplishments of the nominee in the previous year. And for the last two years, at least, I have simply not been bothering to keep up my *bona fides* as a fan artist. I've hardly done anything. Now and then, when pestered enough, I toss a handful of simple drawings at someone for filler. I've done a small number of covers, or some of my filler art has been used as covers, but I have not made any real effort to show my true colours for a long time. My best work I do strictly for myself, posting it to DeviantArt or on Facebook when I think of it. Worst of all, since I regard myself as so far out of the running for the fan art Hugo, I have done my best to forgo even giving a rat's ass.

At this point, all of Old School Fandom's hopes to reclaim the fan Hugos for themselves rests on a handful of realistic candidates, such as *Trap Door* or *Banana Wings*. In the category, everyone's hopes seem focused on Steve Stiles, who has for decades deserved to win as much as any can deserve it, and probably has a lot more appeal than any other candidate that could be put forward. But instead of my name as a runner-up, I'd like to see Marc Schirmeister's ... who has not once been in the short list. Alan West would be another decent choice. Rather alarmingly, we're running out of plausible candidates, as time picks them off, one by one...

It would certainly please me to be nominated as something *other* than Fan Artist, however. I've been working like a fiend on a fanzine for the last four years, nearly, producing an issue of *Broken Toys* monthly. Yet I can't see it happening. I rarely talk about SF, book, writers or any of that tedious stuff so dear to the heart of fandom. Even though, personally, I think the emphasis on SF actually detracts from its appeal, I can't see any zine without that edge being a serious contender for a Best Fanzine nomination.

That leaves Best Fan Writer. And why not? I've written half a million words in the last ten years, I think, and, after so much sheer practice, I've gotten rather more than passable in the art of putting words on paper where they belong. What I write is not always to everyone's liking but whose writing ever is? So there it is. If I want another day in the spotlight, it'll have to be as Best Fan Writer, I suspect. Another Best Fan Artist nomination would certainly please me, but in sense it's just another pin in the box I keep them in. A Best Fan Writer nomination would be Something Completely Different, as Monty Python would say. I'm not even sure whether any ex-fan artist nominee has ever before been nominated in a different fan category. Probably Robert Lichtman knows, and can write a 12-page LOC on the subject.

So, I think I'll leave campaigning for the Fan Artist Hugo to Steve, whose tongue-in-cheek efforts have given him some experience. Perhaps it's time me to start stumping for Best Fan Writer, instead?

You know... *Rat's Ass* wouldn't be a bad name for a fanzine.

You'd be a fine candidate for Best Fan Writer, and I certainly agree that Marc and Steve are supremely qualified Fan Artist contenders. And speaking of Hugos ...

Rich Lynch
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John Purcell got it right in his letter to *Spartacus*, that the "Asterisk" souvenir for the Sasquan Hugo Award finalists "...demeaned the Hugo Awards. ... All you are doing is calling attention to the results, not appreciating the efforts of the [nominees]." I was not at the Awards ceremony at Sasquan; I watched the event from one of the Worldcon bid parties as it was live-streamed. When the first of the No Awards was announced, the room erupted in cheers. But not from me. I can well understand the popular sentiment that a hijacking of the Awards via block voting was just not going to be tolerated, but this was not something that deserved to be greeted with applause. Sad resignation that this outcome was necessary would have been far more appropriate. There were, in fact, several very worthy nominees who ended up as collateral damage in this skirmish. Perhaps we will all take a step back from the brink next time around.

And honor Toni Weisskopf and Mike Resnick for their editing, as they were unjustly punished for Sad Puppy sins.

That seems to be that. I thought of seeing and reviewing *Superman v. Batman*, and was prepared to denounce the director, Zack Snyder, for again mucking about with characters that embody our heritage as Americans and comics readers, but as you see, the reviews have biased me. I'll wait until the furor settles down. Also, there's a terrifying episode of *One Step Beyond* that I need to talk about. Another time, another issue, more primaries, and a Happy Easter and warmer spring to you all.



Peggy



My great pal and collaborator **PEGGY RANSON** passed away on March 20 from cancer. She was, as you see below, a Hugo-winning fan artist (Confrancisco) of precision, passion and power.

Her fannish career began when she took the stairs down from her office with a New Orleans advertising agency to volunteer art for Nolacon II – the '88 Worldcon published her first work in the field which brought her lasting friendship and strong recognition, and those of us who worked with her the brilliance of her talent and the delight of her wit. Peggy was my co-editor on the Nolacon II program book, partnership occasionally rich in decibels but always rich in the joy of collaboration with a superb talent. (I still think Dany Frolich's photo stares into the gutter.) Last line: Peggy was one of the world's great redheads, great artists, and great people. I loved the girl.